UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/1991/NGO/8
21 January 1991

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Forty-seventh session
Item 11 of the provisional agenda

FURTHER PROMOTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF THE PROGRAMME AND METHODS OF WORK OF THE COMMISSION

Written statement submitted by Christian Democrat International, a non-governmental organization in consultative status category II

The Secretary-General has received the following communication which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[28 December 1990]

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR THE REALIZATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

1. Apart from the maintenance of international peace and security as well as international co-operation in solving international problems of various natures, the promotion and encouragement of respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms are among the main purposes of the United Nations (Charter of the United Nations, Article 1, 3).

2. The human rights treaty system, created by the United Nations in pursuance of the Universal Declaration of 1948, plays a central role in the process of promotion and encouragement.

3. In many forums, such as the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights, concern has been expressed repeatedly about the danger of erosion of this still expanding system. In this context, financial problems play a decisive role.

4. Various States parties fail not only in fulfilling their reporting obligations but also their financial obligations. They thus prevent the normal functioning of some treaty bodies which have to supervise the execution of the relevant treaty.

5. The Centre for Human Rights in Geneva, which has a very extensive workload servicing all sorts of international human rights activities, including the provision of the secretariat of all treaty bodies, has a manifest lack of sufficient and sufficiently expert personnel. This shortage concerns not only, but does concern in particular, those committees which deal with individual communications and need the support of specialized and experienced jurists to master the growing number of communications.

6. In particular during the last decade, the tasks of the Centre have increased and it has to be expected that its workload will increase yet in the near future. It is not acceptable that such a development would take place at the expense of the usual high quality. Considering the foregoing and recognizing the United Nations budget crisis, a personnel freeze is neither reasonable nor justified.

7. The United Nations and its Member States have a special responsibility for the existence, the survival and the correct functioning of the system of international supervision. But in spite of the spectacular growth of its work for the realization of human rights, the relevant share in the United Nations budget has not grown accordingly. It is still under one per cent of the regular budget, and should be brought into closer accordance with the real significance of the activities concerned.

8. United Nations Members - whether States parties to the treaties or not - should realise that, although indispensable, political support is not sufficient. If it is not complemented by appropriate financial support, the bodies created by the treaties and the United Nations Centre for Human Rights will not be able to accomplish their duties fully. United Nations Member States should realise that oral support only and lengthy resolutions regarding human rights - one of the main purposes of the United Nations - is not enough, and could become a source of paralysis and frustration.

9. Therefore, we hope that the financial crisis of the United Nations may be solved soon in view of the international détente. But notwithstanding this crisis, we are of the opinion that, as a matter of principle, the whole system of international supervision should be financed from the regular United Nations budget. As a matter of course, States parties have to pay their due financial contributions for as long as the present system is in force. The Secretary General should, however, be empowered to advance their part.